

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 30, 2006

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 6, 2006

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2005–06 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2479

Introduced by Assembly Member Cogdill
(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Villines coauthors:
Assembly Members Berg, Villines, and Yee
(Coauthor: Assembly Member Leslie)
(Coauthors: Senators Bowen and Cox)

February 23, 2006

An act to amend Section 7271 of the Food and Agricultural Code, relating to noxious and invasive weeds, ~~and making an appropriation therefor.~~

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2479, as amended, Cogdill. Noxious and invasive weeds.

Existing law provides that within the Department of Food and Agriculture Fund there is the Noxious Weed Management Account, the funds in which are made available to eligible weed management areas or county agricultural commissioners for the control and abatement of noxious weeds according to an approved integrated weed management plan. Existing law provides that only 5% of the funds in the account shall be made available to the Department of Food and Agriculture for carrying out provisions relating to management of noxious and invasive weeds, developing noxious weed strategies, seeking new biological control agents, conducting workshops, and appointing a noxious weed coordinator and weed mapping specialist.

This bill would make various findings and declarations regarding the impact of noxious and invasive weeds on California. This bill would increase the percentage of Noxious Weed Management Account funds that shall be made available to the department to 10%. ~~This bill would also appropriate \$2,500,000 annually from the General Fund to be deposited into the Noxious Weed Management Account.~~

Vote: $\frac{2}{3}$ -majority. Appropriation: ~~yes-no~~. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature hereby finds and declares each
- 2 of the following:
- 3 (a) The spread of certain harmful, nonnative species of plants
- 4 causes enormous damage to the environment and economy of
- 5 California.
- 6 (b) The destructive impact of invasive and often poisonous
- 7 noxious weeds is profound, affecting California's cropland,
- 8 rangeland, forests, parks, and wildlands.
- 9 (c) Enormous sums of private, state, and federal resources are
- 10 lost through decreased land productivity, degradation of wildlife
- 11 habitat, and outright destruction of crops, livestock, wetlands,
- 12 waterways, watersheds, and recreational areas caused by noxious
- 13 and invasive weeds.
- 14 (d) The estimated lost crop *and forage* productivity caused by
- 15 *invasive and* noxious weeds is ~~seven million four hundred~~
- 16 ~~thousand dollars (\$7,400,000)~~ *\$33 Billion* nationwide, a large
- 17 proportion of which is attributable to California.
- 18 (e) Noxious and invasive weeds have destroyed large portions
- 19 of riparian habitat along creeks, streams, rivers, lakes, reservoirs,
- 20 and other bodies of freshwater in California, damaging the
- 21 integrity of ~~the~~ riparian system by altering erosion,
- 22 sedimentation, flooding, and fire.
- 23 (f) Proper noxious and invasive weed management in riparian
- 24 habitats is critical to sustaining California's freshwater supply.
- 25 (g) The invasive weed *Arundo donax* (giant reed) has
- 26 established large colonies across the state, most notably ~~in~~
- 27 southern California, where one in 10,000 acre area of ~~riparian~~
- 28 ~~habitat~~ the weed has been estimated to have consumed more than
- 29 30,000 acre-feet of water each year, or enough water to meet the

1 yearly freshwater needs of 150,000 persons. *Over one million*
 2 *dollars (\$1,000,000) is spent annually on controlling Arundo in*
 3 *southern California.*

4 (h) The invasive weed yellow star thistle has infested more
 5 than 20,000,000 acres, roughly 22 percent of the state, and is
 6 quickly expanding in the Sierra and into the Coastal Range,
 7 making it the most common invasive plant in California, choking
 8 out native plants and killing horses who eat its poisonous early
 9 season growth. *Yellow star thistle consumes extra groundwater*
 10 *estimated to cost sixteen million dollars (\$16,000,000) to*
 11 *seventy-five million dollars (\$75,000,000) each year in the*
 12 *Sacramento River watershed alone.*

13 (i) *Tamarisk (saltcedar) trees, found along waterways*
 14 *throughout the arid west, including southern California, are*
 15 *estimated to cost between \$133 Billion and \$292 Billion*
 16 *nationally each year in lost water, flood control, hydropower,*
 17 *wildlife habitat, and recreation.*

18 (j) California has a noxious weed management program for the
 19 purpose of managing and eradicating noxious weeds though
 20 specified local weed management areas. These programs to
 21 prevent, control, manage, and eradicate nonnative and noxious
 22 weeds have emphasized information sharing, education, and
 23 public awareness and participation as critical to the success of
 24 prevention, control, and eradication efforts.

25 (j)

26 (k) Local weed management groups have benefited greatly
 27 from the commitment of the state to fund weed eradication, and
 28 these weed management groups have been successful in
 29 identifying and eradicating invasive and noxious weed species in
 30 their regions.

31 (l) *The California Noxious and Invasive Weed Action Plan,*
 32 *September 2005, calls for expanding funding for local weed*
 33 *management groups.*

34 SEC. 2. Section 7271 of the Food and Agricultural Code is
 35 amended to read:

36 7271. (a) The Legislature designates the Department of Food
 37 and Agriculture as the lead department in noxious weed
 38 management and the department is responsible for the
 39 implementation of this article in cooperation with the Secretary
 40 for Resources.

(b) There is hereby created in the Department of Food and Agriculture Fund the Noxious Weed Management Account.

(c) Funds appropriated for expenditure by the secretary for purposes of this article may be spent without regard to fiscal year and shall be allocated as follows:

(1) Eighty percent of moneys in the account shall be made available to eligible weed management areas or county agricultural commissioners for the control and abatement of noxious weeds according to an approved integrated weed management plan.

(2) Ten percent shall be made available toward research on the biology, ecology, or management of noxious and invasive weeds.

These research moneys shall be made available to qualified researchers through a grant program administered by the department. Proposals shall be evaluated in consultation with the Range Management Advisory Committee, with emphasis placed on funding of needs-based, applied and practical research.

(3) Ten percent shall be made available to the department, and shall only be used for the following purposes:

(A) Carrying out the provisions of this article.

(B) Developing of noxious weed control strategies.

(C) Seeking new, effective biological control agents for the long-term control of noxious weeds.

(D) Conducting private and public workshops as needed to discuss and plan weed management strategies with all interested and affected local, state, and federal agencies, private landowners, educational institutions, interest groups, and county agricultural commissioners.

(E) Appointing a noxious weed coordinator and weed mapping specialist to assist in weed inventory, mapping, and control strategies.

~~SEC. 3. The sum of two million five hundred thousand dollars (\$2,500,000) is hereby appropriated annually from the General Fund and deposited into the Noxious Weed Management Account which shall be available for expenditure pursuant to Article 1.7 (commencing with Section 7270) of Chapter 1 of Part 4 of Division 4 of the Food and Agricultural Code.~~